

ReefBase 1.0 : A Global Coral Reef Database on CD

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RefBase is a global database on coral reefs developed by ICLARM in response to the demand for summary information on the uses, ecological status and management of reefs worldwide. Having undergone both beta-testing and external review, ICLARM releases ReefBase 1.0 at the 8th International Coral Reef Symposium in Panama in June 1996.

ReefBase 1.0 is a user-friendly database on CD-ROM intended for the use of scientists, resource managers and decision makers. Designed to assemble a standardized set of information, the database will answer a variety of questions such as how much reef area exists in the world, which reefs are subjected to destructive forces, how dependent is a given country on its reefs for food and cash security, what parts of the world are in most need of marine parks, and which reef areas at local, regional or global levels require measures for conservation and sustainable management.

To date, ReefBase 1.0 has information on over 6 300 coral reefs around the world. These include some 1 114 records on bottom cover measurements, detailed resource maps from the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) of over 130 of the most important reef systems in the world, data on over 400 marine protected areas, and at least 1 870 reported perturbations to coral reefs.

ReefBase has summary tables and offers a geographical approach to avail reef information, through *WinMap*. *WinMap* is a low-level geographic access system that allows the geographical accessing and display of data in ReefBase. ReefBase 1.0 uses it to generate maps on country reef distributions, coral reef ecology, use and management, and natural and anthropogenic stresses.

ECOPATH II, the ICLARM-developed aquatic ecosystems modeling software, has been attached to ReefBase 1.0 to allow ReefBase users to model coral reef ecosystems, and describe average states and estimate rates of key reef processes based on available data in ReefBase.

ReefBase 1.0 also contains human reef use indicators developed and integrated into the database by the Rapid Assessment of Management Parameters (RAMP) project in collaboration with the University of Rhode Island. The RAMP subdatabase contains a parsimonious set of indicators of coral reef related behaviors as well as related political, socioeconomic and cultural variables used to assess, predict and potentially manage these behaviors. For its first release, ReefBase 1.0 features the results of some of the field tests of RAMP indicators in Jamaica and the Philippines. RAMP and ReefBase together will generate a standardized database for

exploring interrelationships between human aspects and coral reef ecology and management.

ReefBase has already begun taking an active part in the global movement for the informed management of the world's coral reefs. It has been a central feature of the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) of which it serves as the official Resource Center. ReefBase is expected to play a major role in the upcoming 1997 International Year of the Reef. In view of this, ReefBase 1.0 will be providing key information for the planning and implementation of projects within this program, and will continue to perform the same role for similar reef related initiatives.



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